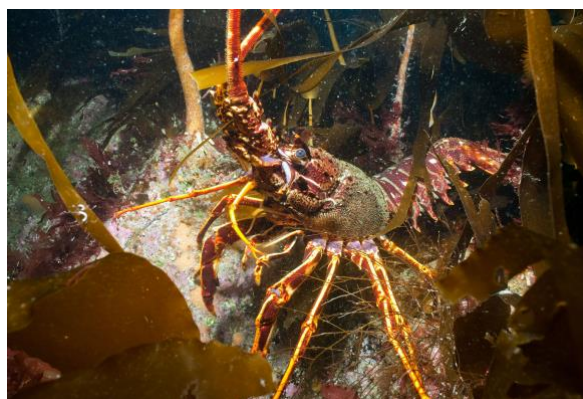


Spiny lobster sightings: Project description



CSP2	Description	Priority: Medium
Title:	Recording the abundance and distribution of spiny lobsters <i>Palinurus elephas</i>	
Overall aim:	To obtain an indication of the present distribution and size of the spiny lobster population within the MPA.	
Justification:	The spiny lobster <i>Palinurus elephas</i> is the sole listed feature of the Lundy Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), established as the first MCZ in the country in 2010.	
Associated objectives:	It would be useful to determine the size of individual spiny lobsters, but this may prove impossible <i>in situ</i> . Small spiny lobsters are usually seen hiding in narrow cracks and crevices with just their two long antennae extending out of their hiding place. Should an individual be encountered in the open, it is also tricky for a diver to be able to measure their size/length, given the sharp protuberances on their bodies.	
Background:	During the late 1970s and early 1980s, divers reported that sightings of spiny lobsters (also known as crawfish) around the island were becoming fewer and fewer. There were certainly no large ones to be seen. By the late 1980s there were hardly any. They were being extracted by fishermen as well as divers. This situation was repeated at other popular dive sites throughout the south-west. During the past 10 years however, more young spiny lobsters have been seen at these same sites, including at Lundy. Currently, spiny lobsters are not allowed to be landed within the Devon & Severn IFCA District. They are still actively fished for in Cornwall however.	
Methodology:	This project does not require any specific methodology and could be carried out whilst undertaking another diving project. Please note the approximate size of any individuals seen (body length excluding antennae) and the number of individuals seen within a given area (estimate the size of area searched). After your dive, please obtain a GPS fix of the dive location from your boat skipper which can be added to your sighting record before uploading it.	
Competency:	Divers from Level 1 (Newcomer) upwards.	
No. of people & equipment:	No limits on numbers of participants. For spiny lobster searches, it would be useful to have as wide a coverage as possible around all of the island.	
Special skills/training?	No special diving skills required. The ability to recognise a spiny lobster hidden within a hole in the rock would be helpful! Often, it's just the antennae which may be visible (which, for small specimens, can look a little like antenna hydroids <i>Nemertesia antennina</i>).	
Previous data?	No. Occasional sightings of spiny lobsters are made (and in recent years these have been more frequent) but few are recorded in any kind of systematic way.	
Condition Assessment task?	No. Even though the spiny lobster is the only species or habitat named as a 'feature' of the MCZ, there is no statutory requirement for its numbers to be monitored.	
Special permissions required?	No. As samples are not expected to be collected, no permissions should be required for this project.	
References:	Lundy Management Forum. 2017. <i>Lundy Marine Management Plan 2017</i> . Written by Rebecca MacDonald and revised by Robert Irving. Produced for Natural England by the Landmark Trust, Lundy Island.	
Updated:	v1 (Jun25)	



Photographer: Paul Kay



Photographer: Maggs Ashton